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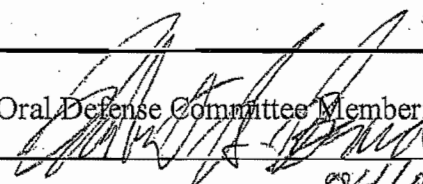
**No Compromise:
Establishing Balance in the US Army's Approach to Full-Spectrum Warfare**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

**Major John C. Welch
United States Army**

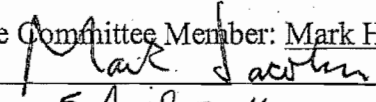
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Executive Summary

Title: No Compromise: A Balanced Approach to Irregular Warfare and High-Intensity Conflict

Author: Major John C. Welch, United States Army

Thesis: Rather than accepting a mutually-exclusive approach to either counterinsurgency or high-intensity conflict as a doctrinal construct, the US Army must reinvest in the development of agile leaders, at every echelon, who possess the technical and tactical proficiency to wage war with the full extent of national military power at their disposal, yet also possess the situational awareness and exposure to the principles of counterinsurgency required to adapt to either environment.

Discussion: Just as the United States Army must adopt a comprehensive doctrinal approach to full-spectrum warfare that can accommodate both the principles of counterinsurgency and high-intensity conflict, it must aggressively pursue the development of an agile leadership culture that can operate across the full range of military operations. Although the Army's development and implementation of counterinsurgency doctrine has led to sharp divisions among the force, it simply cannot afford to forget the hard-won lessons that it has learned from the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq anymore than it can afford to ignore the potential for it to prevail against future conventional threats.

Conclusion: The United States Army must focus on how it must develop a professionally agile force that accepts the entire range of full spectrum operations, possesses the cognitive ability required to understand the battlefield environment beyond a simple assessment of enemy military capability, and exhibits the operational expertise required to formulate an appropriate response to emerging threats.

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Preface

As with many veterans of Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM, a significant number of hours contemplating and discussing the United States Army and its approach to the prevailing threats to national security. Having observed the advent of counterinsurgency doctrine, both before and during the now famous surge of 2007, I fear that the US Army has not yet fully articulated a clear expectation for its leaders to reconcile the hard-won lessons of nearly ten years of experience in Iraq and Afghanistan with a more traditional approach to high-intensity conflict. While many opponents have argued for a departure from counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare doctrine as a valid concern for conventional forces, in favor of a return to a more conventional tradition, this study attempts to provide a comprehensive approach to full spectrum warfare that fosters an agile leader mindset and allows leaders to conquer any environment. Without a clearly defined narrative for full-spectrum warfare and a renewed approach to agile leader development, the Army will continue to needlessly polarize over the right application of counterinsurgency doctrine. At the heart of the issue, Army leaders must promote an aggressive return to training fundamentals and values-based leadership. Certainly, just as marksmanship, battle-drill proficiency, physical fitness, and first-responder capability defined success for combined-arms operations in the past, the Army cannot afford to discount the important role that a Soldier's understanding of the environment plays in his ability to make the right decision.

Introduction

Following nearly a decade of fighting in Afghanistan, and nearly as much time in Iraq, the United States Army stands at a pivotal crossroads as it internalizes the lessons from those two conflicts and postures to defeat future threats to national security. Aside from a stark polarization between proponents for counterinsurgency doctrine and traditionalist adherents to high-intensity conflict doctrine, current Department of Defense projections for reduced budgets and manpower restrictions ensure that the Army must reconcile its capability to address threats across the entire operational spectrum with the substantially difficult reality that it will remain an all-volunteer, fiscally constrained, strategically overtaxed, and relatively small force. While the Army cannot afford to allow the current prominence of counterinsurgency doctrine to inordinately define its future, it must also regain its proficiency as a lethal combined-arms force without discarding the hard-won lessons that it has learned on the streets of Samarra or Kandahar. Unfortunately, the difficulty associated with providing security in Iraq and Afghanistan has also seemingly caused the Army to doubt its fundamental belief in the preeminent position that leadership plays on the battlefield. Rather than accepting a mutually-exclusive approach to either counterinsurgency or high-intensity conflict as a doctrinal construct, the US Army must reinvest in the development of agile leaders, at every echelon, who possess the technical and tactical proficiency to wage war with the full extent of national military power at their disposal, yet also possess the situational awareness and exposure to the principles of counterinsurgency required to adapt to either environment.

A House Divided

In order to appropriately guide the formation of an agile leadership culture, the US Army must first establish a comprehensive doctrinal approach to full spectrum warfare that resonates across all echelons and provides leaders with the tools and operational context

required to make sound decisions in any threat environment. Following the very recent publication of *Field Manual 7-0: Training for Full Spectrum Operations*, the US Army has dramatically readjusted its framework for developing units and leaders that are capable of addressing the myriad of potential threat environments that they will face in the contemporary operating environment and beyond. However, just as the previous edition of *FM 7-0* represented a dramatic shift in favor of counterinsurgency and irregular warfare, the US Army must ensure that it does not overcorrect toward a parochial view of high-intensity conflict and lose the very balance that the new document so ably supports.

While many leaders are wary of initiating yet another round of organizational change within the force, having endured a successive wave of attempts at transformation during the tenures of General Erik K. Shinseki and General Peter J. Schoomaker as Chief of Staff for the Army, they are especially wary of any new efforts to redefine the contemporary operating environment.¹ Unfortunately, the recent prominence of counterinsurgency as a principle training focus for units bound for Iraq or Afghanistan and Army's dramatic restructuring effort to keep pace with a punishing operational tempo for forces deployed around the world, have also precipitated a sharp divide among Army leaders over how the US Army should posture for the future. That divide not only clouds any academic discussion within the force, but also needlessly prolongs corporate acceptance for a leadership culture that appreciates the fluid character of warfare in the modern era. Beyond the publication of new doctrine, the US Army will undoubtedly face a significant battle within a force that does not necessarily accept the premise that the current operational continuum demands excellence in the principles of counterinsurgency and high-intensity conflict alike.

On one side of the issue, many of the proponents for counterinsurgency doctrine, who have fought so hard to effect strategic change in Iraq and Afghanistan, believe that the current

operational environment provides sufficient proof that future threat organizations will inevitably rely on insurgent tactics to defeat the United States Military in a protracted struggle that the American people will not likely tolerate.² Dubbed *Coindinistas* by their opponents, they believe that even the most conventional conflicts will eventually devolve into a counterinsurgency environment through the mobilization of nascent guerilla groups that seek to seize the opportunity to damage the US Military's reputation or through the reversion of a defeated conventional army to guerilla tactics intent on achieving the same end.³

On the other side of the current debate, many traditionalist officers believe that the current force is dangerously ill-prepared to counter the looming conventional threats associated with an ascendant People's Republic of China or an increasingly aggressive North Korea.⁴ In particular, the recent hostilities between the two Koreas in late 2010 has justifiably sparked a renewed debate over whether the United States Army is capable of reorienting its force to address similar threats to national security. In light of that argument, the Army's increasing atrophy in traditional battle command system proficiency, leads many to believe that the Army cannot address such conventional threats without a deliberate reorientation toward high-intensity conflict.⁵

While each of these arguments rely on generally valid assessments, the bitter polarization that exists between these two schools of thought only serves to obscure the logical conclusion that the Army undoubtedly needs to prepare for both environments as part of a comprehensive strategy for the future. However, rather than focusing on the development of agile leaders who exhibit the level of professional flexibility and vision required to proactively address the full-spectrum of potential threat environments, the US Army has largely assumed a reactive role in its approach to the current operational environment. While the revision of FM 7-0 marks a significant step in the right direction, the Army will continue

to face high operational tempo requirements and limited dwell time for units that will further constrain its ability to deliberately implement organizational change. In addition, looming budgetary constraints within the Department of Defense will undoubtedly force the Army to reassess its institutional, technological, operational, and strategic posture as it attempts to adapt for the future.⁶

The Way Ahead

Recognizing the need for fundamental change within the joint services, Admiral Michael Mullen's cover letter for the 2011 National Military Strategy provides a clear admonition for each of the services to improve their capacity for full-spectrum operations through the dedicated development of agile leaders, even in the face of anticipated budget reductions.⁷ As the subtitle for that document implies, America has reached a strategic inflection point where it must redefine its expectations for military leadership in the emerging strategic environment. While the National Military Strategy does not address counterinsurgency or high-intensity conflict as specific focal points, the absence of those terms only serves to reinforce the document's consistent references to the requirement for full-spectrum capability. Furthermore, its consistent focus on the requirement for agile leadership, and adaptation in the face of complex security environments, provides a clear expectation for each of the services to conduct a sober assessment of the organizational biases that inhibit progressive changes in the development of their leaders.⁸

In order to establish the sort of leadership culture that the 2011 National Military Strategy outlines, the US Army must pursue a deliberate reconciliation between the disparate factions that have developed in the wake of the doctrinal debates over the US military's approach in Iraq and Afghanistan. Apart from exacerbating the current struggle for a clearly articulated approach to full-spectrum warfare, that reconciliation must accentuate the

pressing need for Army leaders to adapt to the changing character of war while preserving a fundamental respect for the Clausewitzian truths of its fixed nature. While many leaders have attempted to classify counterinsurgency as a more difficult form of warfare that supercedes Carl von Clausewitz's ostensibly narrow, and exceedingly kinetic, view of war as a classic struggle between two conventional forces that adhere to the same rulebook, that position only serves to inflame the traditionalist camp. Such proponents not only discard the Prussian military theorist's views on the inherently violent nature of war and its relation to popular support for its political objective, but they also run the risk of elevating counterinsurgency theory to a position of prominence that supercedes all other doctrine. In such an environment, the US Army must move beyond such distracting rhetoric if it hopes to engender a truly worthwhile discussion on the practical transformation of its doctrine.

While the current polarization among Army leaders certainly inhibits the development of agile leaders, as it prevents the acceptance of a single narrative for full-spectrum operations that can resonate throughout the force, it also distracts the Army from addressing three critical shortfalls in its recent approaches to doctrinal reform. First, the US Army needs to reinforce the enduring lessons that it has drawn from the contemporary operating environment as a subset of a more complex narrative that encompasses the entire range of full-spectrum warfare. Second, the US Army must reestablish a comprehensive approach to training management that prepares units for combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan without sacrificing traditional expectations for mission essential task proficiency. Third, the US Army must reform its approach toward leadership development and professional education in order to prepare its leaders for an increasingly complex, and globally networked, threat environment.

Incorporating the Lessons of Counterinsurgency

Beyond a discussion of the tactics, techniques and procedures that define the US Army's implementation of counterinsurgency doctrine, the US Army needs to encourage a robust evaluation for how it intends to bridge the gap between the operational experience that its leaders have accumulated over the last ten years with an increasingly prescient need for a force that can apply that experience to the defeat of a near-peer competitor in a conventional conflict. Too often, both skeptics and adherents to the principles of population-centric counterinsurgency reduce the subject to a series of tips on cultural awareness, techniques for interagency partnership, successful methods for establishing combined outposts with local security forces, or best practices for negotiations with tribal powerbrokers. In doing so, they often treat the subject as if it were a separate and distinct approach to combat operations in a manner that belies its relevance to a broader approach to full-spectrum warfare.

Such myopic classifications of counterinsurgency practices make it extremely difficult for junior leaders to employ a wide array of lethal and non-lethal operations in an inherently diverse and nuanced security environment. At the heart of that issue, Army leaders need to evaluate how the contemporary operating environment has forced the Army to rethink its approach to organizational adaptation, its efforts to develop broad situational awareness within the force, and guidance for the proportionate use of military force.

Organizational Adaptation as a Lasting Requirement

Apart from establishing a nucleus of operational understanding within a force that has endured over ten years of constant deployment, the US Army's experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan offer several key lessons that apply to both counterinsurgency and high-intensity conflict environments that it cannot afford to ignore. While that body of experience provides a number of practical lessons, it consistently highlights the important role that agile leaders provide to successful military planning efforts and the iterative adjustment of those plans in

the face of an evolving enemy template. As an organizational culture, the US Army has historically preferred the use of doctrinal decision-making templates and elaborate flow-charts to predicatively analyze the outcome of warfare. However, the complex adaptive systems that the US Army has faced in Afghanistan and Iraq have challenged the use of any simplistic model for predicting the outcome of military operations in the contemporary operating environment. Consequently, the emergence of counterinsurgency doctrine as an accepted school of thought warrants evaluation as a case study in the US Army's willingness to accept opinions and operational approaches that differ from the mainstream.

The current popularity that counterinsurgency doctrine enjoys among many Army leaders today has started to eclipse the fact that many conventionally-minded leaders in Iraq had begun to adapt their approaches to that conflict long before General Petraeus' publication of *Field Manual 3-24: Counterinsurgency*. In particular, the 101st Airborne Division, and the 3rd Armored Cavalry Division warrant significant credit for their adaptive use of counterinsurgency doctrine in Mosul and Talafar during the early years of Operation Iraqi Freedom. However, before 2007 and the "Surge" in Iraq, many other units at the company, battalion, and brigade level contributed to the vanguard of leaders who realized that the Army could not win in Iraq without a drastic change in the way it approached such a complex environment. Given the fact that many units still wrestle with core tenets of counterinsurgency doctrine and their implementation, the Army must assume that any attempts at doctrinal reform will require significant follow-through.⁹ Ultimately, rather than fixating on specific tactics, techniques, and procedures for counterinsurgency operations, the US Army should focus on the fundamental resistance to change that its leadership culture imposed upon an emerging groundswell of tactical leaders who had the courage to challenge the status quo.

Beyond Cultural Awareness

Certainly, whether viewed from a strategic, operational, or tactical perspective, the United States Army was not prepared for counterinsurgency operations in either Afghanistan or Iraq. In retrospect, Army units also undoubtedly compounded the detrimental effects of major combat operations on the local population with a pervasive ignorance of the social, political and cultural context for their actions. Often mischaracterized as a lack of cultural awareness, imperfect situational awareness often negated many of the positive efforts that coalition forces sought in either theater. However, more than the ignorance of cultural or social norms, the Army's overarching deficiency during the opening stages of both conflicts lay in the troubling lack of understanding that US Army leaders exhibited toward the strategic implications for tactical and operational decisions in an extremely complex political and social environment. While many have argued that fundamental flaws in the United States strategy for both Afghanistan or Iraq resulted in the prolonged conflicts that continue to threaten both of those countries, the US Army cannot ignore the fact that its leaders were just as woefully unprepared to engage with a foreign population as they were to transition away from the high-intensity conflict environment that had defined the Army's approach to training, organization, and strategy during the Cold War.

While the US Army has gone to great lengths to improve its corporate understanding of the operational environment, and rightly apply a nuanced approach to counterinsurgency that addresses the panoply of established political and social frameworks within a given operating environment, it still wrestles with a collective ignorance of world history and foreign affairs that stems from American society as a whole.¹⁰ While some have argued that the soldier on the ground in Afghanistan is no more of a political agent than one who stormed the beaches of Normandy in 1944, the US Army cannot ignore the fact its men and women

often deploy with only the faintest understanding of the environment they intend to influence.¹¹ Such broad generalizations only serve to discredit the myriad of operational experiences and organizational evolution that the Army experienced in the latter half of the twentieth century and the last decade of constant conflict. Given the uncertain nature of future operational requirements, the US Army must establish an unbiased approach to its doctrine for full spectrum warfare in a manner that does not negate the important lessons of Iraq or Afghanistan anymore than it could negate the important lessons of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, or Desert Storm. However, given the dramatic shortfalls that the Army encountered in the counterinsurgency environments of Iraq and Afghanistan, it must also ensure that the correct lessons from those conflicts receive the immediate attention that they deserve.

As with the apparent surprise that the Army exhibited during the growth of a Sunni-led insurgency in Iraq, and the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, many Army leaders have not fared well in their ability to accurately assess the sentiments and motivations for insurgent support among a foreign population.¹² If the United States Army expects to demonstrate any mastery in countering enemy efforts to foment protracted insurgencies in future conflicts, it must address its historic bias against understanding the political, social and cultural aspects of human terrain in the contemporary operating environment.¹³ Even as Army units have improved their resident knowledge of the Middle East and Central Asia with each successive combat deployment, the Army needs to corporately accept that experience does not necessarily equate to expertise. Especially within Afghanistan, not even the local population truly understands the detrimental effects that thirty years of constant conflict has imposed upon their society.¹⁴ If the US Army intends to deploy leaders who not only possess the requisite knowledge required to move confidently among such a battered fabric of tribal networks, but also possess the ability to apply that knowledge in a constructive fashion, it

needs to pay particularly close attention to the level of institutional education that it provides for such environments.

Transitioning Between Security Environments

Many proponents for counterinsurgency doctrine generally infer that the US Army's corporate reliance on heavy-handed tactics in Iraq and Afghanistan, in tandem with its general disregard for the civilian population, only served to strengthen insurgent popularity following the initial invasion of those two countries. However, a more deliberate analysis of the initial invasion of Iraq, reveals that a number of tactical leaders exhibited superb situational awareness and thoughtful response to extremely dynamic security situations set amongst the local population. For example, Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Hughes demonstrated remarkable leadership acumen with his well-publicized decision to have his troops take a knee and smile when faced with an angry crowd of Iraqi men who feared that US soldiers were intent upon entering the famous golden-domed shrine of Najaf in 2003.¹⁵ Opponents to the softer, non-lethal aspects of counterinsurgency doctrine might argue that Lieutenant Colonel Hughes' decision needlessly placed American Soldiers in harm's way. However, the fact that his battalion had just fought against entrenched insurgent forces as they entered Najaf, and then went on to fight further pitched battles along their advance into northern Iraq, leads to the more compelling issue surrounding the role that leaders play in balancing a unit's tactical posture with the varying degree of risk associated with any given security environment. Given the unconventional nature of Lieutenant Colonel Hughes order, and its successful outcome, one must ask whether the US Army approach to leadership development is capable of reproducing leaders who are equipped to make such immediate and influential decisions in future conflicts.

Proportionate Use of Force

Perhaps the most difficult aspect that leaders face in the contemporary operating environment is the relationship between the proportionate use of force and the local population's perceptions of the protection that counterinsurgent forces ostensibly are there to provide. The current operational environments in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to present a compelling requirement for well-rounded leaders who are just as proficient in managing the elimination of insurgent networks through kinetic operations as they are in supporting host-nation government efforts to enfranchise the local population. At the lowest levels, those leaders consistently face the difficult task of articulating a comprehensive approach to the use of lethal force that applies just as readily to a conventional raid objective on any given night as it does to census operations on the following day.

Particularly in Afghanistan, as the enemies of the United States continue to bait patrols into sustained engagements in populated areas and seek to trigger the use of air-delivered ordnance on civilian compounds, the local population's perception of American constraint and justified escalation of force plays an important role in that country's political rhetoric. While the local population may have initially viewed the United States' dominant use of military power with awe, that view has morphed into fear and resentment as the struggle in that country has drawn out over the years. Rather than treating this subject as a unique obstacle that develops within counterinsurgency environments, the US Army needs to recognize that a fulcrum point exists in every potential conflict environment where the court of world opinion and the local civilian population will no longer tolerate the perception that military operations have resulted in an inordinate loss of innocent life. While such perceptions obviously favor insurgent narratives, they also present a significant weapon that foreign governments have exploited to influence world opinion in conventional conflicts throughout

history. In future conflicts, the United States Army must accept the fact that it cannot enter a given security environment without incurring a finite margin for error in its lethal targeting efforts. Consequently, it must develop discerning leaders who understand the full range of lethal response that their formations can apply to any given engagement and make rational decisions under fire.

To that end, Army leaders continue to struggle in their pursuit of standardized guidance for the proportionate use of force and acceptable levels of risk during combat operations. Adding to that debate, the western news media and a number of voices from within the military community have often portrayed population-centric counterinsurgency doctrine as a wayward approach that encourages leaders to place greater value on the preservation of indigenous civilian lives than it does on the lives of American service members.¹⁶ While the notion that counterinsurgency does not allow for the use of lethal force is an absolute farce, the mixed reaction from units in Afghanistan to General Stanley A. McChrystal's Tactical Directive in 2009 indicates that many leaders have failed to articulate a viable expectation for their units to identify the potential for kinetic operations to actually threaten the success of their overall mission.¹⁷ Apart from the strategic implications that stem from that reaction, the operational and tactical reality for forces currently deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan reinforces the fact that kinetic operations play an essential role in even the most permissive population-centric counterinsurgency environments as long as leaders are able to appropriately assess the relevance of a given target and its relationship to the larger security environment. Unfortunately, too many units continue to exhibit caustic attitudes toward sound principles for the proportionate use of force. Perhaps more than any other debate on the effects of the current operational environment on the Army's posture for future conflicts, United States Army leaders need to establish a refined set of expectations for the

proportionate use of military force.

Returning to Fundamentals in Training

While the US Army continues to wrestle with the assessment and inclusion of the worthwhile lessons that the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have highlighted, it must also revitalize a number of leadership development and unit training strategies that have atrophied over the last decade. As the US Army has steered away from its traditional training management approach, in favor of unit-specific pre-deployment training requirements exclusively focused on combat readiness for counterinsurgency operations at the platoon and company level, it has forgotten many of the lessons that Lieutenant General Arthur S. Collins articulated in his book *Common Sense Training* in 1978. Apart from influencing a US Army approach to training management that resulted in one of the most well-prepared forces for modern high-intensity conflict in the world, Collins' work prompted the US Army to solidify its Eight Step Training Model and called for a recognition that fewer high-quality training events will result in better prepared units than a myriad of low-quality training events conducted in rapid succession.¹⁸ While most junior leaders in the Army today would have a hard time explaining the Army's Eight Step Training Model or their Mission Essential Task List, the revised edition of FM 7-0 demonstrates an important Army initiative to return to a comprehensive and methodical approach to training leaders and units for combat.

While many leaders have lamented the fact that too many combat arms formations are deploying to either Iraq or Afghanistan without traditional live-fire training qualifications, too few leaders have fought to propose a composite training model that addresses the pre-deployment training requirements in concert with expectations for combat proficiency.¹⁹ Fortunately, FM 7-0 plainly states that Army units must establish a demonstrated proficiency in drills, marksmanship, fitness, and military occupational specialty training before they

attempt to tackle the more complex collective tasks.²⁰ While many units have adopted certain tasks associated with stability and support operations as part of their Mission Essential Task List (METL), no formation can afford to neglect its responsibility to its basic war fighting functions. Of course, the limited amount of time that a unit spends in its reset phase between deployments places significant burden on Armor and Artillery units due to the unique technical proficiency that their specific disciplines require.

However, the assumption that the Army has placed so much emphasis on counterinsurgency training that units cannot find the required time to establish basic METL proficiency at the platoon and company level is not valid. Too often, units rush into collective training events that they have designed to fully replicate the security environments of Iraq or Afghanistan without first establishing the basic combat proficiency that those security environments demand. While it is unfair to classify counterinsurgency as a “graduate-level” of warfare, leaders must appreciate that it is a specific discipline that draws upon basic combat proficiency in order for units to successfully navigate the unique challenges associated with that environment. In much the same way that Airborne and Air Assault Infantry units must remain proficient in their ability to conduct a deliberate attack before they can expect to employ their unique capability for vertical envelopment, all units must demonstrate a basic proficiency in the fundamentals of patrolling before they can ever expect to employ a unique capability for counterinsurgency operations.

Leadership Culture Reform and Education

Doubtlessly, the Army’s ability to maintain proficiency across such a wide range of capabilities relies upon an expectation that leaders and units have the capacity to absorb such an enormous body of knowledge. As the Army attempts to yet again expand its capability for full-spectrum operations, it should take confidence in the fact that it has excelled in similar

endeavors within the last thirty years. In comparison to the dramatic transformation that brought it out of the post-Vietnam era, the current requirement for organizational reforms in doctrine, leadership culture, and training should not appear so daunting. However, the Army must not forget that the reforms of the 1980s largely relied on Army's institutional capability to affect change across the entire force.

More than any other arena, the Army's Professional Military Education provides a centralized capability to affect change within the force at a modest cost over time. Although it will undoubtedly take some time to implement, the Army must focus on reforming its Officer Education and Non-Commissioned Officer Systems to better prepare leaders for the contemporary operating environment. Until then, it needs to reinvigorate the fundamental role that Training and Doctrine Command plays in promoting standardization at the Combined Training Centers and through the use of Mobile Training Team visits to units at their home station. However, as with many of the Army's current initiatives for transformation, the Army could learn a lot from recent efforts to adapt its approach to leadership development.

For example, in June 2000, Army Chief of Staff General Erik K. Shinseki established the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) in an effort to reform the Army's lagging approach to training and leadership development. Along with his other transformational efforts to increase the Army's expeditionary capability and reform its organizational culture, ATLDP represented General Shinseki's intent for bridging the operational gap that existed between the Army's experiences in Desert Storm with its experiences in the former Yugoslavian states. As with the development of the Stryker Brigade Combat Team and Army Vision 2010 concepts, which articulated a phased approach toward an objective force capable of spanning a vast spectrum of future security environments,

General Shinseki focused more on the development of agile leaders than he did on the technological or organizational initiatives that largely define his legacy today. In similar fashion, General Peter J. Schoomaker also tried to instill a number of transformational initiatives that fell to the wayside as the Army wrestled with a growing need to support the more pressing requirements that Afghanistan and Iraq imposed upon the force. With the operational pressures that the US Army faces today, and the looming budgetary constraints that the Department for Defense has projected for the years ahead, many leaders within the US Army are justifiably wary of transformation as a concept in general. However, if the Army cannot adapt its leadership culture in a manner that incorporates the lessons of the current operational environment with the enduring requirement for excellence in high-intensity conflict, then it risks failure in an increasingly complex global security environment.

As the ATLDP survey pointed out, both Officers and Non-Commissioned officers believed that the Army's Professional Military Education system did not meet their expectations for a well-rounded curriculum that prepared them to succeed in the contemporary operating environment. In addition, those leaders felt a compelling need to pursue individual education outside of the Army in order to remain professionally competitive among their peers.²¹ While the Army has addressed some of the major points of the ATLDP study, it largely supported individual educational opportunities as an incentive for retention rather than implementing an institutional capability to educate leaders within the force. In the same fashion, although the Army has made significant attempts to broaden its Professional Military Education curriculum as a result of the ATLDP study, it has not fully addressed a growing requirement for its leaders to exhibit a far more comprehensive understanding of the political, cultural, and historical contexts that have shaped the contemporary operating environment.

Given the lasting relevance of the ATLDP study, the United States Army cannot afford to miss the opportunity to provide its leaders with a comprehensive understanding of the local environment wherever it intends to commit combat forces. In contrast to the well-established model for United States military intervention that tends to oversimplify the investment of resources and overarching security concerns associated with military action in a foreign land, the US Army must readdress its basic educational requirements for leaders, at all levels, if it hopes to remove the stigma that its approach to strategy is often “simple, quick, and wrong.”²² Rather than isolating that requirement for comprehensive education as a component of existing education systems, the US Army needs to address the fundamental deficiency that its leaders exhibit in world history, military history, and political science. In the contemporary operating environment, with the implications of globalization and the increasingly dominant effects of the information environment on military operations, the US Army must ensure that both its officers and non-commissioned officers understand how their actions affect strategic and operational objectives.

While the officer corps would undoubtedly benefit from specific commissioning requirements that target undergraduate surveys in political science and world history, the Army should also invest in accredited, postgraduate-level courses that focus on the application of those disciplines within a contemporary military context. However, in contrast to every other service in the joint community, the Army has yet to implement an accredited graduate degree program for its Intermediate Level Education schools. Rather than withholding the expectation for true graduate-level study at the Intermediate Level of Education, the US Army should go even further and include such courses of study as part of the core curriculum for the Officer Basic and Captain’s Career Courses. Such an investment would undoubtedly reap an exponentially greater return for a comparatively meager

investment from the US Army over the course of an officer's career, and prepare leaders for the graduate-level decision making ability that it demands in the contemporary operating environment.

In similar fashion, the Basic and Advanced Non-Commissioned Officer courses do not adequately prepare their graduates for the complex political and social environments of the modern battlefield. In light of that deficiency, the US Army should establish a program of undergraduate-level courses designed to increase the corporate understanding of civil-military interactions in the modern context, and offers the benefit of transferable college credits to a population of leaders that often do not have the time to pursue a traditional undergraduate degree. As with the officer education system, the Army's institutional training opportunities provide a viable means for transforming the force without imposing unnecessary distraction to unit training progressions for Afghanistan or Iraq.

In a budget-constrained environment, the Army must also look for opportunities to invest in leadership development programs that will not incur an exorbitant expense. While American soldiers have always demonstrated a knack for adaptability, demonstrating initiative, and exploiting success in combat, institutional Army systems do not typically afford leaders the opportunity to exercise those skills in a training environment. Numerous officers have echoed this sentiment in their post-deployment interviews with the Center for Army Lessons Learned. In particular, a number of battalion commanders have lamented the fact that the Army invests much more trust and authority in its company commanders while they are deployed in a combat environment than it does while they are back at their home station.²³ In particular, those commanders felt that the institutional Army had doggedly clung to a status quo approach to training, organization, and facility support that had changed very little since the 1980's. In particular, the US Army needs to encourage a much more decentralized

approach to risk management for off-site training events and static live-fire marksmanship training in an effort to present a more balanced expectation for competent leaders both at home and in combat.

Similarly, along with an aggressive return to fundamental approaches to collective training and live-fire exercise certification, the Army should revitalize its approach to leader training. In particular, leaders should also expect their units to provide an intensive training program that broadens their experiential knowledge in both lethal and non-lethal capabilities. Aside from merely integrating civilian role players on the objective, units should develop partnership programs with local civic authorities that will allow leaders the opportunity to appreciate the internal workings of a functional civil administration prior to any expectation that they can rebuild one from scratch in a foreign society ravaged by war. Again, the Army has corporately forgotten another essential lesson that Lieutenant General Collins promoted back in 1978 with his call for the Army to reestablish a program of Unit Schools that had proven so effective during the World War II era. Today, the use of unit-level Officer Professional Development (OPD) and Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development (NCODP) programs attempt to remain true to that concept, but they rarely receive the level of deliberate attention that they deserve.

Conclusion

Just as the United States Army must adopt a comprehensive doctrinal approach to full-spectrum warfare that can accommodate both the principles of counterinsurgency and high-intensity conflict, it must aggressively pursue the development of an agile leadership culture that can operate across the full range of military operations. Although the Army's development and implementation of counterinsurgency doctrine has led to sharp divisions among the force, it simply cannot afford to forget the hard-won lessons that it has learned

from the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq anymore than it can afford to ignore the potential for it to prevail against future conventional threats. In similar fashion, the Army cannot ignore the fact that it has failed to adequately prepare its leaders for the increasing complexity that they will face in the contemporary operating environment anymore than it can afford to ignore the need for a more comprehensive approach to training and education within the force. While the recent revision of FM 7-0 represents a significant accomplishment, the Army cannot simply rely on doctrinal revision as it attempts to affect organizational change. Instead the Army must invest in the one resource that can affect such change, and focus on the development of leaders who are capable of turning that doctrine into a force that is capable of dominating the full-spectrum of warfare.

End Notes:

- ¹ Les Brownlee and Peter J. Schoemaker, "Serving a Nation at War: A Campaign Quality Army with Joint and Expeditionary Capabilities," *Parameters*, Summer, 2004, 5-23.
- ² Stephen Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency*, Strategic Studies Institute, (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College External Research Associates Program, 2007), 1.
- ³ Stephen Metz and Raymond Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response*, Strategic Studies Institute, (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College External Research Associates Program, 2006), 1.
- ⁴ Gian P. Gentile, "A (Slightly) Better War: A Narrative and Its Defects," *World Affairs*, Summer, 2008 accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/articles/2008-Summer/full-Gentile.html>.
- ⁵ Colonel David B. Haight, who commanded 3rd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division in Afghanistan during 2008-2009 and supervised a superbly integrated civil-military approach to counterinsurgency, provided a clear warning to the Center for Army Lessons Learned that his brigade would have to spend a lot of time at the National Training Center before reorienting on the threats posed by the likes of Iran, China, or North Korea. See: *Colonel David Haight, Commander Interview conducted 14 June 2009 at Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan*, Center for Army Lessons Learned, 2009, 7-8.
- ⁶ Craig Whitlock, "Pentagon To Cut Spending By \$78 Billion, Reduce Troop Strength," *The Washington Post*, January 7, 2011, accessed February 16, 2011 http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/06/AR2011010603628_pf.html.

- ⁷ Department of Defense, *The National Military Strategy of the United States, 2011: Redefining America's Military Leadership*, (Washington: The Joint Staff, 2011), 20-21.
- ⁸ Ibid, 16 "Our focus on leadership, not simply power, necessitates that we emphasize our values and our people as much as our platforms and capabilities. The all volunteer force will remain our greatest strategic asset and the best example of the values we represent. In addition, we must continue to find innovative and affordable ways to provide the full range of capabilities necessary to fulfill this strategy while making difficult tradeoffs between modernization, capacity, capability, posture, and risk."
- ⁹ Craig Whitlock, "Brigade's strategy: 'Strike and destroy,'" *The Washington Post*, October 14, 2010, accessed February 22, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/13/AR2010101307296_pf.html.
- ¹⁰ Colin S. Gray, *Irregular Enemies And The Essence Of Strategy: Can The American Way Of War Adapt?*, Strategic Studies Institute, (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College External Research Associates Program, 2006), 7.
- ¹¹ Gian P. Gentile, "A Strategy of Tactics: Population-centric COIN and the Army" *Parameters*, Autumn 2009, 5-17.
- ¹² Ahmed S. Hashim, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 2006, 17-20.
- ¹³ Major General Michael Flynn, Captain Matt Pottinger, and Paul D. Batchelor, *Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan*, Center for a New American Security, Washington, DC, 2010, 7.
- ¹⁴ The author has adapted this characterization of Afghanistan from a number of conversations with General (Retired) Stanley A. McChrystal during his tenure as Commander, International Security Assistance Force.
- ¹⁵ Dan Baum, *Battle Lessons: What the Generals Don't Know*, *The New Yorker*, January 17 2005, http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/01/17/050117fa_fact?printable=true¤tPage=all, 1.
- ¹⁶ Rod Nordland, "Violence Up Sharply in Afghanistan", *The New York Times*, June 19, 2010, accessed February 20, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/20/world/asia/20afghan.html?_r=1&sq=afghanistan%20tactical%20directive&st=cse&scp=11&pagewanted=print.
- ¹⁷ Headquarters, International Security Assistance Force, *Tactical Directive 06* July 2009, accessed February 10, 2011, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/isafnewsrelease2.pdf>
- ¹⁸ Arthur S. Collins, *Common Sense Training: A Working Philosophy for Leaders*, (Novato: Presidio Press, 1978), 201-206.
- ¹⁹ Gian P. Gentile, "A (Slightly) Better War: A Narrative and Its Defects," *World Affairs*, Summer, 2008 accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/articles/2008-Summer/full-Gentile.html>.
- ²⁰ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 7-0: Training Units and Developing Units for Full Spectrum Operations*, (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2011), 2-4.
- ²¹ Department of the Army, *The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to The Army*, (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2002), accessed February 13, 2011, <http://www.army.mil/features/ATLD/ATLD.htm>, OS 1-2

and OS 12, and *The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Non-Commissioned Officer Study Report to The Army*, (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2002), accessed February 13, 2011

<http://www.army.mil/features/ATLDPNCO/default.htm>, 24-39.

- ²² Anthony H. Cordesman, *Shaping the Future of Counterinsurgency Warfare*, (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2005), 3.
- ²³ Lieutenant Colonel Eric R. Timmerman, *Commander Interviews Volume V*, Interview conducted 05 November 2009 at the Balad Joint Coordination Center, Iraq, (Fort Leavenworth: Center for Army Lessons Learned, 2009), 45.

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